

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 24, line 12 as follows:

Figures 22, 22A and 23 illustrate a valve support device 350 for correcting valve malformations such as that shown in Figure 21. These devices are especially useful for treating ischemic conditions in which one side of the mitral valve pulls away from another side resulting in imperfect coaptation of the respective anterior and posterior valve leaflets 332, 334. Specifically, device 350 is in the form of a ring-shaped support member 352 having a selectively adjustable and lockable portion 354. As shown best in Figure 22, ring-shaped support member 352 may be reformed into the shape shown in phantom and retained in that shape. Alternatively, device 350 may be formed with a permanent asymmetric shape about both axes x,y. As shown in Fig. 22, a first or major axis "x" extends along the maximum dimension of the support member 352, while a second or minor axis "y" bisects the support member 352 along the "x" axis. The major axis "x" generally divides an anterior section 352a from a posterior section 352b of support member 352. The intersection of the "x" and "y" axes defines a valve flow axis 353 extending normal to major axis "x" and minor axis "y." As shown in Figure 23, the ability to squeeze portion 354 of ring-shaped support member 352 together and retain portion 354 in that position will bring the anterior and posterior valve leaflets 332, 334 together to close gap 338. Figure 22A illustrates one manner of allowing selectively adjustable and lockable positioning of ring-shaped support member 352. In this regard, respective socket segments 354a, 354b, 354c receive balls 356 therebetween and further receive a wire 358 which may be tensioned and locked in place with a set screw 360 by use of a tool 362. When wire 358 and socketed segments 354a-d and balls 356 are loosened, adjustability of section 354 is possible.

Once the adjustment in position is made, wire 358 is tensioned to bring the balls and sockets together and then lock in place using tool 362. This retains the adjusted shape. As also shown in Figs. 22 and 23, support member 352 in this embodiment is a ring shaped member that is substantially "D" shaped when viewed in a direction parallel to the valve-flow axis 353 (that is, in top view or bottom view). The anterior section 352a is configured to form a substantially straight portion of the "D"-shape, and the posterior section 352b is configured to form a substantially arcuate portion of the "D"-shape. As also shown in Figs. 22 and 23, support member 352 in this embodiment is a ring shaped member that is substantially "D" shaped when viewed in a direction parallel to the valve-flow axis 353 (that is, in top view or bottom view). The anterior section 352a is configured to form a substantially straight portion of the "D"-shape with first and second ends at opposite ends of the straight portion, and the posterior section 352b is configured to form a substantially arcuate portion of the "D"-shape.